

A minor prophet has a major conversation with God about justice!

Week 6: Confidence in the Lord.

WELCOME

Spend time relaxing and sharing together.

Icebreaker. Can you think of any unexpected journey you've been on?

It could be a literal journey to a physical place, or a journey of learning about something, or as some part of your life that has been a journey of discovery and change. Did the journey change your views on anything, and if so how?

WORSHIP

You could begin by doing some or all of the following ...

- Read some or all of Psalm 84.
- Listen to a worship song or hymn which expresses praise to God, such as *Highest* by Hillsong
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=uufp2dYPUw>
- Share some of the ways you enjoy worshipping God, such as time with him in the garden at the beginning of the day before things get busy.

WORD

We've come to the final session in our mini-series. To get the broad overview you may find it helpful to watch this short video from The Bible Project to get an overview of Habakkuk

<https://bibleproject.com/explore/video/habakkuk/>

Read Habakkuk 3 v 1 - 19

1. Read v 1

What do you notice about the top and tail of this chapter?

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Why do you think these comments are there?

What does it tell us about the journey Habakkuk has been on in the course of this book?

2. The chapter gets properly underway in v 2 with 3 statements

- I stand in awe of your deeds.
- Renew them in our day.
- In wrath remember mercy.

What happens to our perspective when we look around and see the works of God in nature, in science and history?

I wonder what God is waiting for us to ask of him in our day and our time. Any thoughts?

Habakkuk agreed with God's judgement on his country of southern Israel, his judgement on Judah because of her unfaithfulness.

Jerusalem fell to King Nebuchadnezzar of Babylon in 597 BC and her rulers were taken into exile and the temple destroyed.

What does our nation deserve?

What does the death and resurrection of Jesus mean in all this?

3. Read v 3 – 15

What is the most powerful and awesome thing you have seen in nature? What does it tell you about God?

4. Read v 16b

At the beginning of this book, Habakkuk was demanding an immediate explanation of the violence and injustice around him, now he says he will wait patiently for Babylon to be judged. What has changed/

5. Read v 17 & 18

Whatever happens, Habakkuk determines he will rejoice in God.

How do you think you would respond if everything around you failed?

If you were to re-write these verses for our day and our time, what would it look like?

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What does it look like to decide to find joy in God our Saviour?

6. Read v 19 and Ps 18 v 33

Habakkuk finishes this book and his journey with an echo from David's Ps 18. In his commentary on Habakkuk, David Pryor points out that both King David and Habakkuk are given *'the ability to move nimbly like a deer on dangerous terrain. They are given the strength, not just to stand firm and to cope in the face of immense adversity, but to rise above it and to make swift progress, - to climb, not simply to coast. H has discovered the secret of turning the hills and mountains into opportunities to discover more of God's strength in his inner being.'* (p. 278)

When times of adversity come do we look to stand and cope or do we look to make progress. What could we do in order to climb and not coast?

WHAT NEXT?

Habakkuk shows us not only can we have an honest conversation with God in which we can expression our distress and even our anger, but God listens and responds. Talking and listening to God builds our relationship with him and can deepen our faith.

Look at your diary for the next week. When could you spend 30 mins, or better still an hour, with God talking to him about how you're feeling at the moment and simply being in his presence? You may find it helpful to actually book that slot in your diary so nothing else fills it! Write him a prayer or letter expressing your thoughts and emotions and asking him any questions which are on your heart.

I asked you to do the same thing in session 2. If you did, re-read the letter or prayer you wrote. What has changed, what has stayed the same? How do you need to pray now as a result?

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When we look at our world and bring our complaints to God, when we wait on him, we become aware of his sovereignty and his glory. God is at the centre of this universe, not us. He brought into being from nothing by his word, and the purpose of everything in this universe is to worship him and live in relationship with him. Our wrongdoing, our rebellion, our refusal to worship him or walk in love with him, our abuse of this planet, our inhumanity to one another all cry out for his just and right judgement. As we pray *Lord in wrath remember mercy*, we see the cross, where God's judgement and mercy meet and are both fully satisfied. God wrapped himself in flesh and was born as one of us. He lived on earth the way we are each meant to live, in relationship with our maker, and then he took on himself all our wrongdoing, all our rebellion, all our abuse. He bore it on the cross and broke its power, defeating once for all the power and consequences of evil and wrongdoing throughout the universe, reconciling us for ever to our God. God is one who made us, who never stops loving us and would rather die than let your wrongdoing and mine get in the way of our relationship with him.